



Psychological Traps

A Brain-Based Checklist for Risk
Management©

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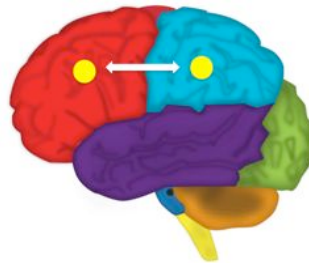
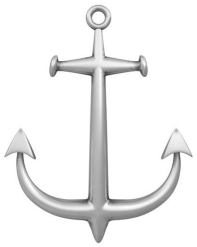
The following check-list of brain-based questions is based on eight psychological traps described by Hammond (Hammond, Keeney et al. 1998). The questions themselves are original using Hammond's framework to help construct a brain-based set of questions to assess potential traps that could exist.

Psychological Trap

Brain Region

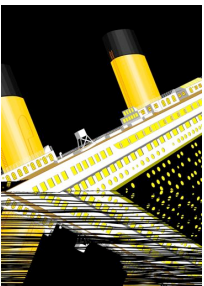
Questions

Anchoring Trap



1. What would be different if I moved away from the first information received?
2. What new information do I need to consider?

Status quo trap



1. What are the moving parts?
2. Why might my brain reject the changes that are necessary?

Sunk Cost Trap



1. Should you stop now?
(Have I accepted my mistakes?)
2. Do I regret my choice beyond being disappointed?

Psychological Trap

Confirming evidence



Brain Region



Questions

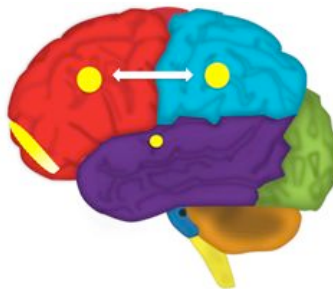
1. Have I distinguished between what makes me feel good and what is good for the situation?
2. Am I rationalizing my choice?

Framing



1. How else can I see this?
2. Is this being packaged in a misleading way?

Overconfidence



1. Am I overly focused on short-term rewards?
2. Am I filling in gaps?

Psychological Trap

Brain Region

Questions

Prudence











1. Am I going to slowly?
2. Is my hesitation unconscious fear-based?

Recallability



1. What else besides the drama?
2. Am I too short-term focused?

The table on the next page is one that you can keep by your side to use as a guide during important decision-making.

	Psychological Trap	Brain Region	Bias	Reason for bias	Question
1	Anchoring 	Fronto-parietal	Falling for initial information	Brain has not moved forward from initial information	What new information do I need to consider?
2	Status-quo 	Ventral-striatum	Shifting deck-chairs on the Titanic	The brain does not feel rewarded by the real change that needs to occur	Why might my brain reject the changes that are necessary?
3	Sunk-cost 	Anterior insula Dorsomedial, PFC OFC	Shame about past mistakes dominates	The brain is disappointed by avoids regret	Have I accepted my mistakes?
4	Confirming evidence 	Inferior frontal Medial fronto-parietal Ventral Striatum	Rationalization	The brain rejects new possibilities immediately	What is good for me vs. the situation?
5	Framing 	vmPFC ACC	Seeing things only one way	The brain does not ask enough what if questions	How else can I see this?
6	Overconfidence 	Medial temporal Fronto-parietal OFC	Confidence without sufficient exploration	The brain avoids deep emotional connection with the truth	What questions truly remain unanswered?
7	Prudence 	Amygdala Insula	Fear-based braking	The brain is trapped by fear	Is my hesitation slowing things down?
8	Recallability 	DLPFC	Influenced by high drama	Drama makes high brain-noise that captures your attention	How do I differentiate between dramatic facts and important facts?



